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FROM

T. W. Higginson

UNDER WESTERN SKIES POEMS

FRANK CARLETON TECK

UNDER WESTERN SKIES

UNDER WESTERN SKIES

POEMS

BY

FRANK CARLETON TECK

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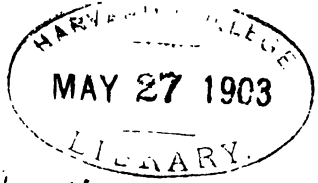

J. W. Higginson

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MOONLIGHT

Like a great gull with silver wings
    Stretched, quivering, o'er the sea,
The moon her glistening plumage brings,
    And hovers silently.

DAY

The silver spears of Morning, pointing high
Up from the East, deploy against the Night,
And as we look, aflame with pearly light,
The snowclad sentinels of ages vie
With the effulgent glories of the sky
In shifting splendors—then the ravished sight
Beholds the God of Day in mystic might
Rise regally above the mists—a sigh
Of fog-veils lifting—then the thrilling sweep
Of gladsome voices freights the bracing air
With Joy,—till Sunset, when with reddened spear
The weary Chieftain o'er the Western deep,
In livid rage, retreats, the while a flare
Of scarlet volleys taunts the hosts a-rear!

NIGHT

Now on the field the starry hordes appear
And sow the glooming vault with crystal sprays,
Far diamond treasures hung belike in praise
Of some fair astral goddess drawing near.
High in the opal north, as if in fear,
The polar sentinel's pale face displays
The signal of the night, and all ablaze
With brilliant dyes the Evening Star stands clear.
And now a beryl blush o'erspreads the East,
A cheering glow adorns the twinkling crowds,
The myriad eyes seem symbols of Delight—
Like some fair queen parading to the feast,
Slow gliding up among the jeweled clouds,
Triumphant rides the Mistress of the Night!

A CATHEDRAL OF THE AGES

My skiff is pillowed on a sunless sea
    In a lone hollow of the emerald shore,
    Far from the town, far from the ceasless roar
And fevered hum of trade and industry:
The wild, majestic Bay of Mystery,
    Rock-walled, fir-pillared shrine of eerie lore,
    Mute witness of the ages evermore—
Sublime reminder of what used to be!

I feel my view of Time grow wondrous wide:
    I see the world of old, and, overawed,
  note the magic of the swelling tide,
    Instinct with pow'r transcending human laud—
All while wind-heralds through the forests ride
    And fill the solitudes with songs of God!

CHARITY

I dreamt I died last night and that no rest
Came to my soul: The angel Memory laid
His burning palm upon my brow ; a shade
Upset Temptation's vitriol on my breast—
Whereat Mephisto grinned and called me blest!
A god of Gossip told how I had strayed
From lovely lawns where Virtue's children played,
And notes of jeer and scorn rang East and West.
My tortured soul grew sick with anguish—then,
As if some heavenly host had cleared the sky,
An angel chorus made the Impians cease,
And all the shades, save Memory, vanished when
God's Charity sang a tender lullaby
And bade my weary spirit rest in peace.

THE BLUEJAY

Deep in the roomy wild of noble trees
And waving dogwood and syringa blooms,
There is a nook walled in by dreamy glooms
And regal fern, and hung with luxuries
Of honeysuckle, fondled by the breeze
That robs the tall, sweet-breath spiræa plumes
Upon its murmuring voyage from the tombs—
The cooling bosom of the tragic seas.
List! Hear that weird voice strike the solemn hill
And pierce the sullen forest with its shrill,
Exultant melody!—the cedar stirs!—
A bold bird, mockish, through the stillness whirrs,
And poised on limb above a babbling rill,
Laughs loud—the impish soldier of the firs!

EVENING

Long, lurid lines of crimson trace the sky
And brighten tow'rd the glory-visaged West;
The waning of the glow upon the crest
Of yonder hill entreats the weary sigh:
"Another day is going—Night is nigh."
The sun dips in the Ocean's shimmering breast
And smiles a warm farewell as if he guessed,
Alas! it were for us fore'er "Goodbye!"—
Light falls the dew; the fog of fleecy gold
Droops, gracefully, to kiss the languid bay,—
Then swells and weaves its eerie fingers o'er
The trees, the flowers—all it may enfold;
The air breathes echoes of the dying day,
And Evening trills the siren songs of yore.

THE WATCHERS SLEPT

The guardsmen slumbered while the fight was on—
Their thousands five and thirty reckoned not
Their idle pow'r, nor how their comrades fought,
Outnumbered, till the sorry day was done,
And all surrendered with the setting sun.
They slept!—as if the trumpet tones had brought
No ringing call to arms—as if they sought
Defense no more but feared the awful gun!
How the trained legions of the foemen swept
Like tidal waves along the listless shore,
Scaled the high wall and, ere the day was o'er,
Full-plumed to glory and the ramparts leapt!—
And—oh! the sting of shame forevermore!—
'T were never done but that our soldiers slept!

WHEN APRIL COMES

When April comes, the hollow sky
Grows wide, and radiant, and high,
    As if the theater of man
    Were set to show some nobler plan
Of Nature's variant mystery;—

As if the audience, bye-and-bye,
Should hear some holier minstrelsy—
    Some higher art of God should scan—
        When April comes.

The snow-mist's dream-inspiring sigh
Seems like some far-off prophet-cry
    Above the siren pipes of Pan—
    A ghost of Winter's broken ban,
Upon the ambient air to die—
        When April comes.

QUO VADIS

As one begloomed and lost far out a-sea,
O life, I grope in thine old mystery!
As some poor star, foredoomed, falls endlessly,
O death, must I too lose myself in thee?

MY VALENTINE

My Valentine is sweet and fair,
As merry as the wimpling air,
And long I 've loved and longed to see
Again her wonted smile for me
Beneath her brown, wild wavy hair.

She'd toss a kiss from Cupid's lair,
And if to pay the debt I 'd dare,
She 'd coyly cry, "You cannot be
My Valentine!"

Ah, may she never know a care,
But joyous music be her share,
Ungloomed with dirge or threnody—
A girl so gentle, blithe and free,
To know her is a privilege rare—
My Valentine!

THE RIVER

The clouds lay low in the heavens
And the dim, weird night came on,
And the cold, pulsive river was sullen
With a ghost of the light long gone.
And the trees sighed gruesome dirges,
And the waves bore grimy foam,—
But the star-eyes mellowed the river,
The turbulent river at home.

The bats flapped drowsily o'er me
In the air that was thick and chill,
And the owls made dulcet music,
And all save these were still.
And, though in these shadows of Nature
No song birds sought to roam,
The stars shone bright in the river,
The ruminant river at home.

And so in the dismal darkness
The rivers of hearts e'er flow:

Some foaming with worldly poison,
The lowliest of the low;
Some deep in crime's dark whirlpool.
Or rude as the current's wrath;
Some gliding o'er new-found courses,
Some holding the sure old path;

And, though the grim trees murmur
The ruinous, rumored tale,
And the wise owl seem to jeer him
And the bat the searcher rail,—
When the passion-clouds have scurried
Away from the mystic Whole
The stars illumine the river
That pictures the human soul.

THE AFTERMATH

"Ha ha!—what fools!" the raven said,
Tilting his glossy, sheeny head,
Rolling his roguish, roving eye
Over the field from sky to sky
Strewn with the carnage drear and dread;
Laughed at the wounded, stained so red,
Laughed as he flapped from dead to dead—
"Men are such gifted fools, say I!—
Ha ha!—what fools!

"Passion unchained and blood is shed:
Desire unhaltered maketh its bed
Out where the night-winds sob and sigh,
Out where the warriors useless die—
And I flap on from dead to dead—
Ha ha!—what fools!"

QUILSHANE

(Name of an Indian chief; Indian name of Mount Baker.)

Far in the dim days of the past,
Beside the fir-fringed sunset seas,
There dwelt a storied tribal host
Of brown-browed aborigines.
Close by the yielding, shell-strewn shore
Their barken habitations stood,
And in the forest waste around
Reposed a noble solitude.

They knew no world beyond the hem
That girt the shore—the fronded trees
That sentineled and sheltered graves
Of ancient aborigines.
Their bread the pregnant ocean brought,
Their feast grew in the tide-lapped sands;
The treasure-laden, wooded shore
Supplied their simple arts' demands.

QUILSHANE

Full-charged with soothing kisses came
The soft winds of the Japanese,
And warmed this garden of the gods
For sunset aborigines,—
For seldom in this laughing clime
The rime of winter's wrath appeared,
And strangely on the vision gleamed
The white crowns of the mountains weird.

Their chief, a brown god of the braves,
Was loved and feared—the mystic seas
Were deemed the children of his whims
By lowlier aborigines—
And so, upon the wave of Fame,
The name of Quilshane, the tyee
Lay pillowed, like a child of Fate,
A shibboleth of Destiny.

Lo! on the snow wall of the East
The lights of stranger camps appear!
And rings above the sob of tides
The voice of the bold pioneer.
Anon the holy men of God
The white hearts of the red men won,
And tought the brotherhood of man,
And smoothed the white tide coming on.

QUILSHANE

The silent monarchs of the wood
Bowed to the arms of other lands;
The mirror-sea in reflex told
How revolutionary hands
Smoothed the rough brow of savagery,
Like magic made the rude sublime
And waked the fairest flower of all
That cheer the corridors of Time.

O'er Tyee Quilshane's favored shore
The voice of young Ambition rang,
And from the ashes of the wild
Strange miracles of man upsprang.
Like giants of some spirit realm
The engines of the white man sped
Within the royal parks of him
Whose name marks eras dim and dead.

So, in this brimming dip of Time,
Beside the opal Puget Sea,
Fair cities stud the noble realm
Where reigned the aborigine;
Up from the new scene, as of old,
The sky-kissed, jeweled mountains rear,
And tireless, restless, on and on,
Push Progress and the Pioneer.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOLITUDE

THE FOREST

I dreamed beneath a canopy of fir,
    Beneath a godly bower—a mesh of green,
    Whose mystic murmuring and mellow sheen
Engulfed the trilling of the birds. The whir
Of feathery forms upon the hazy blur
    Of dreamy quiet spirited the mein
    Of Fancy's airy blendings in the scene—
The dear, remembered child-ideals that were!
A breeze sighed solace to my troubled soul
    And whispered through the wilderness of wood.
Alone! away from fellows of the whole
    Grief-laden, striving world, the drunken mood,
Untrammeled, gained the self-consuming goal,
    And knew the luxury of Solitude.

THE PRAIRIE

I stood amid an endless wold of grass,
Amid the prairie's undulating weave,
And near and far toward the shimmering heave
Of mirage in the distances—alas!
The distances unbroken through the glass,
Unstudded by a soul to know, to leave!—
The billowy seas of odorous grasses grieve
On mounding curves and laugh in the morass;
And o'er and o'er the restless, wandering air
Breathes scurrying dapples on the pliant plain;
And dreamily and languidly the glare
And aweing glamour of the verdured main
In soughing whispers seems to say: "How fair
These masterpieces of unlovely rain!"

WHAT IS THE NEWS

Joseph Medill, editor of the Chicago Tribune, died at San Antonio, Texas, March 16, 1899. It is said his last words were: "What is the news?"

"What is the news?"—he turned his head
And, waiting, innocent of dread,
Looked forward to the mystic way
Whereon no eye of living clay
Hath gazed since word of man was said;—

Aye, at the gateway of the dead,
Between the unread and the read,
He breathes the query of the day:
"What is the news?"

O Soul, here nobly tenanted,
From questioner to witness fled,
Tell us the gloried news that may
Else be denied a world for aye—
Tell us, O Soul, whence thou hast sped
"What is the news?"

AS IT MAY BE

The clouds have lifted from the recent row;
The wounds are open that should have been healed;
Laid low, but handy, gleams the frowning shield,
And battle-pallor marks the sweating brow:
Alone to Fate the vanquished, muttering, bow—
Resign the arms that they were wont to wield,
And, sullenly returning to the field,
Rejoin to mock defeat that marks them now.

A smold'ring rage upheaves anon the strong,
Ungovernable hosts; the thick turmoil
Grows on, and on! misguided rags rebel;
A devasting war of wrong 'gainst wrong
Floods the grim land and taints the virgin soil—
And Progress drives the trained steeds of Hell!

COMMUNION

I fled from a throne of sorrow,
Where Hope lay white and still,
For I dreaded the grim, long morrow
That stretched over Life's high hill.
It was night, and coldly above me,
Far distant, the starry dome
Spoke only of those who love me
In the veiled and unknown home.

I paused beside the ocean,
For my heart was crushed with care,
And I felt the wide vault of emotion
Thrilled through with the kinship there.
For the great waves seemed to mutter
The grief I could not speak,
And the voice of the breeze to utter
My prayer as it kissed my cheek.

COMMUNION

I seemed to feel infinite sorrows
Of millions who watched ashore
And waited and wept for tomorrows
To bring home their Hopes once more.
And the thought of their grief—ah, madness!—
That sobbed in the waves' long roll
Filled my heart with a tender sadness,
For the sea had touched my soul.

Oh mourner, go thou to the ocean—
There is peace in its lonely roar,
For it sings the deep dirge of devotion,
Of grief that was borne before.
Its voice, like the sayings of sages,
The measure of time hath fled,
And its song is a child of the ages—
A soul-song from the dead.

A WAR-HERO

There was magic in his presence as he dashed upon the field
Bringing promise to his comrades that the enemy must yield.
When his charger bore him forward to the serried ranks of foes
There was wild hurrah of triumph and the cloud of carnage rose—
As the shock of battle sounded, as the ruinous rush began,
As the horsemen broke the columns and the beaten foeman ran.—

But what of the heroes falling
In the ranks of the fell defeat?—
And what of bereaved ones calling
For the "missing" of the retreat?

There was bay upon his forehead as he rode to reap his fame;
There were flowers in his pathway, nations cheered his noble name;

A WAR HERO

Poets sang his praises grandly, courtiers wined and dined
him well;
Wreaths paraded by sweet children in the hero's presence
fell;
Art, bribed from its mission, sought to fathom his desire
And the nation's altar offered all to which he deigned
aspire.—

But what of the charger, battered?
Peace gave him ingratitude rare!
And what of the veteran, tattered?
He wears a white crown of care.

THE UTOPIAN PIONEER

Oh, give me the throb of solitude
And the kind, sympathic tear;
And the breath and the sigh of the kinship mood
Of the Utopian pioneer!
Oh, give me a heart that is kind and true,
And a hand that is free from wrong,
And a soul that mourns with a conscious rue
For the ills of the great, sad throng.—
Oh lift me out of the cynical vale
Where the stern realities war,
And place me up where the evils pale
In the lights of the goods that are!
Oh, take me out of the selfish rut—
From the glums' and the gluttons' gloom—
And raise me up where the heart is shut
From the feel of the golden plume:
There is never a kind word gone astray
And never a smile's light lost;
There is ever a joy in the mildest way,
And a sting from the rude, rough host.
Oh, give me the joy of solicitude
And the kind, sympathetic tear,—
And the breath and the sigh of the kinship mood
Of the Utopian pioneer.

JUST A LITTLE SYMPATHY

Just a little fellow,
Foreigner to joy;
No one to say "hello!
Merry Christmas, boy!"
Just some yuletide laughter
Of a luckier throng,
Raising roof and rafter
With the joyous song.
Just a ragged, little chap,
Peeping in to see,
Met with childish pleasantry—
Thoughtless raillery.
Just a little broken heart
Feeling more alone—
Though the tears refuse to start,
From the soul a moan.
Just a small, caressing hand
Of a passerby,
Just a smiling, happy land
To the poor child's eye.
Just a little brotherhood
Moving hearts and hands—
Just a little motherhood
In bereaved lands.

SONG OF THE OLD MARINER

Oh, lads, I am dying for love of the sea!
I would I could borrow its woe,
Its riotous power and rapturous glee,
And down countless fathoms could go.
Oh the sea, the restless sea!—
The billowy boisterous sea!—
Oh, laddies, that I might mirror the sky
And be free as the merry old sea!
I would cuddle the earth in my measureless arms
And swell in the breast of the gales;
I would weary the winds, I would roll the alarms,
I would live for the life of the sails!
Oh make me the jolly old sea!
The fathomless soul of the sea!
So deep I would creep in the unknown that sleep
Would be rocked in earth's cradle with me!
Oh, a skim o'er the waves in the teeth of a breeze
Brings echoes of strangeling desire
To flee from the leas, from the hills and the trees,
And 'neath the weird waves to expire.
Oh the sea, the turbulent sea!—
The solemn, impassionate sea!—
Oh, lads, when I die let my humble dust lie
In the luminous tombs of the sea!

MY LADY

Far away in the dim, blue sky,
Up, up, in the attic of air
O'er the wings of the winds, so high
Is the home of My Lady fair!
And she smiles in my loitering eye,
In the depths of a saddened soul;
And the bells of Eternity toll
Through the veil of the distance there.

She is lingering over the sea
In the breath of the radiant day,
As the clouds from my heart, set free,
Lift, softly, and wander away:
She is pleading her love for me
To her image still breathing here—
But away in the wail of the year
Of the past is My Lady gray.

WHEN THE COWS COME HOME

When the cows come home o'er the silent lea,
And the leaves are a-rustling soft and free,
    And a twilight blending the sun doth shed
    On the earth below and the clouds blush red
And the turkeys roost in a friendly tree—
Then my thoughts go back to my childish glee
In the pastures green, and the "Good night" tea
    That my mother made fairly turns my head—
        When the cows come home!

Sweet thoughts of love are all naught to me
When home comes in with its gentle plea
    Of mother and father, now long since dead,
    And my heart to those fond scenes seems led
At eve when the sun's last rays I see—
        When the cows come home.

THE PRODIGAL

I would I were a boy again, back in the dear, old place,
Made radiant by a father's love, and mother's cheering face;
Again beneath the glossy oaks I would that I might roam,
A reckless, restless, pranksome boy—the care and joy of home!

I would that I might know as now the luxury of such joy—
Might preconceive the epitome of pleasures of a boy—
And fill the hollow head of youth with wisdom-weighted mirth,
With which to tone the rime of age—the woes of manly birth!

What joy to jar the old plum tree, and dodge the tumbling fruit!
To ramble through the leafy dells and dig the ginseng root;—

What thrilling sport to roll the rocks into the deep blue
stream
And watch the startled minnows dart and the pickerel's
gilt dots gleam!

How soothing in the twilight are the frogs' orchestral
strains!
And how musical the clatter of the milk pans when it rains!
And how gloriously the robins and the swallows greet the
day
Ere the dews, the gems of shadow, and the fog veils fade
away!

Vaguely memoried pass before me all the cattle, one by one,
Browsing out amid the hazel in the cheery blush of dawn;—
How the tiny sheep bells tinkled and the rest went "linkum
lang,"—
Aud how full of glad bird-voices the rejoicing woodland
rang.

Ah, how dear those dimming voices murmuring in the
thoughts of yore,
Breathing in the saddened autumn of the springtime gone
before!
Oh, how full of sweet emotion are the pictures of the past!—

THE PRODIGAL

When the heart's fond reminiscence holds the reins of memory fast!

. . . . . .

I would I were a boy again, back in the dear old place,
Made radiant by a father's love and mother's cheering face!
Forever 'neath the dreamy oaks I would that I might roam,
A careless, airy, happy boy,—the pride and joy of home.

TO SEATTLE

Up o'er the Cascades' hoods of gray
Resplendent rides the god of day,
Like some illuming angel, driven,
Pearl-laden, from the gates of heaven
And slowly gliding high to view
The glories of a realm so new
That as the fog-veils fade for him
A wide, vague sigh, so soft, so dim,
Breathes from the drowsy, waking land
'Round Puget Sound as if the hand
Of God—to stay man's greed-born strife—
But now had shrined the mystery, Life,
In holy harmony.

For thou, Fair Queen, art blessed indeed
With welling founts for human need,
With jeweled hills and monarch trees
That thrill the soul and fill the breeze
With youth-inspiring luxuries
And siren melody;

TO SEATTLE

With leaping streams of laughing gold
From thy New West; and here, unrolled,
About thee linger yet of old
The masterweaves of Nature's loom,
Aroused from immemorial gloom;
While by thy side the dimpling arm
Of our Pacific, far from harm,
Is gentle, like the touch of Love,
Safe from the warring winds above,
And wave-wild tragedy.

Here Neptune's wearied myrmidons,
Unarmed, reflect the gonfalons
Of Foresthood, forevermore
The marvel of this magic shore
Of wonder-industry!
And, like the silvery, living wealth
That loves our sealing's joyous health
And braves new perils o'er and o'er
To swim in ideal home once more,
So are the sons of Sunsetland
Soul-welded all, unpartisan'd,
For home, for Justice, not for Might—
In heaven born—to awe the Right
That weaned Columbia from the crown

And gave to Freedom's fair renown
Its immortality!

. . . . . .

My Washington! from sod to sod
Thy swords, inspired of good and God,
Flash e'er for Liberty!
While from this throbbing mart deploy
White heralds of the New World's joy
(Torn from Atlantic's iron hands)
To flood engloomed Pacific lands
With gleaming Hope and radiant Right,
Commingled in triumphant Light
Across Balboa's sea!

DOWN THE VALLEY

"We are gliding tow'rd the setting of the sun—"
So the song is softly breaking o'er my heart:
"We are going down the valley one by one—"
And the melody refuses to depart;
And it wafts me out to sea,
Wrapped in solemn mystery,
To the realm of varied fancy's "great unknown."

There is loneliness and silence o'er the whole,
Softly whispered in the music to my soul;
All the fears of dissolution one by one
Vanish gently through the spirit of the tune,
And I hear the balmy air
Murmur sweetly everywhere:
"We are gliding tow'rd the setting of the sun."

Every heart has buried treasures, loved and dear,
Every being sacred pictures all its own;
In the shrine of every heart the ghosts appear—
And the veil is only drawn when we're alone!
Then how fatal the refrain
To the jealous tinge of pain—
"We are gliding tow'rd the setting of the sun."

AFTER DEATH

When I am gone will "someone" sadly cling
To something I have said—some heart be sad
Because a dear, dear friend hath taken wing?—
And can my work of good veil that of bad?
Ah, when I die will someone gently sing
Some sad refrain that once I doted on?—
Will there be tears of tender sorrowing
As if I had been loved—when I am gone?
Ah, tell me now that I may feel the sting,
Or know the joying of the living love!
Lift up thine eyes and let their glories bring
The truth that maybe death knows nothing of.
When I am gone will worldly "mourners" fling
Their musty cloaks about them—lay upon
My bier a trade-extolling offering,
And then fore'er depart—when I am gone?

SPOKANE

Here at the Inland Empire's heart,
Amid this verdured prairie,
'T is fit that men of brawn and brain
And thought-creation tarry:
Here, like a strong young giant waked
To guard and keep his flock,
This noble city stands between
Yon border heights of rock;
And, like a tireless god of life
Caressing the soul of man,
Quenching the thirst of the pregnant land
Glides the cool-waved Spokane.
For here the tools of genius are
An inspiration rare
For minds as broad as the prairies wide,
And free as the highland air;
For aims akin to the towering peaks
That rise in the rear and van,
For hearts and souls and wills that yield
Like the glorious old Spokane.

THE CAROLISTS

Here they come a-trooping, whooping,
Laughing, chaffing, jackadaws,
Heterogeneous jumping, bumping,
Boisterous hosts of Santa Claus!
Charging in from every door,
Full of candy, lugging more,
Loaded with many a toyshop store,
Woolly doggies and dollies galore—
Merry golarkins of Santa Claus

Here they come a-trooping, whooping—
Babyland, without its laws;
Musical lilliputs, dabbling, babbling—
Beautiful army of Santa Claus!
Now they are trilling the carols o'er,
All of them thrilled by the curious lore—
"Hark! was that Santa?" (the log fire's roar)
All knees come with a thud to the floor
And the little hands rise and big eyes implore—
Dimpled defenders of Santa Claus!

THE DEAR OLD CAROLS

Bring out the sweet old carols and brush off the dust of the years;
Let me turn over the pages, yellowed and blotted by tears.
Ah, how the fairy-like faces of dear ones revive with the songs!
How thrillingly near is the prattle of playmates long lost in the throngs!
How the firelight recalls the old fancies from exile to action again,
And the crystal-like icicled maple and the frost-etching window pane!
Bless the dear dream-laden carols, the fond recollections of yore,
The songs sung so lightly in childhood, the music of souls evermore.

PLEASURE

There is no elixir of Life divine
More eloquent than that we call the wine—
Blest with more scope to tempt mankind to taste—
To sip, to drink, and, as some will, to waste.

Within its bead the smile of welcome glows,
And down the ruby depths no sorrow shows.
But deep and far, whence siren sweetness raced—
Tho' all the hosts of Hope and Health oppose—
Remorse rides down who dares behold her shrine.

IF I COULD DIE

If I could die tonight, and so forget
    The self-deplorings of a weary heart:
If I could fall asleep, and sleeping let
    Fore'er each load of consciousness depart;
If from my soul the stain of life were taken
    And every weak desire were fully fled,
And in my heart no earthly wish could waken—
    Were I not blessed to be so gently dead!

No gloomy veil of morrows hung before me,
    Nor phantom scenes of deep regrets behind;
Nor yet the pall of grim mischance thrown o'er me,
    Nor smiles, nor tears, nor masking of mankind;
But only these: Oblivion and Time—
    Time greater than all ages gone before,
Oblivion all idle yet sublime—
    And both unchanging so forevermore.

ON BELLINGHAM BAY

When Vesper stars with jewel wings
The stole of Night array,
The moon her shimmering reflex flings
Athwart the trail of day.
Her white face glows with spectral pride,
As if the dewy eve
Had brought some Cynthian victory-tide
Her splendors to retrieve.

A noble peace enfolds the scene—
A splash of silver spray,
A phosphorus rush and sport of sheen,
A lone wild bird's last lay,
And then a low, sweet lullaby
Of brooks and lyre-like rills—
The while that radiant face on high
Illumes a world of ills!

LIKE SHIPS

Like ships on an unknown ocean
Men cruise o'er the waves of life,
Each laden with silent sorrows,
Each racked in the swells of strife.
Some sink 'neath the sobbing billows,
Some, lost from the harbor light,
Drift out in the fatal channel
Of dark and endless night.

But over the mystic ocean
The balms of promises flow,
Bearing away the sadness,
Feeding new hopes that glow
Out on the gloomy ocean,
Out on the sea of souls,
Out where Fate is pilot,
Out where the life-wave rolls.

THE DEAD DEFENDER

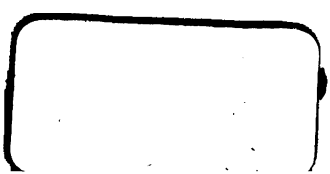
To no Columbian sacred memory
Belong the nation's thoughts so tender,
Or gratitude so soulful, as to thee,
O silent son! O dead defender!

LINCOLN

His life was like a wave of light:
O'erflowing hearts with glory,
And then dissolving in the night—
A sad, bright, sacred story.

THE INFALLIBLE TRINITY

May joy attend thy birth, New Year!
And happy hearts thy death, Old Year—
For why
Should we sit and sigh
When you die? * * *
Nay, Birth is a trinity goddess here,
And death, her sister, as dear, Old Year—
And far above—
But with and of
Them—God crowned Love.

THE EVENING OF THE YEAR

The red sun sinks in gold, the drowsy air
Toys softly with the crimson-dappled leaves;
The calm old ocean's beryled bosom heaves
And sighs; the clean-limbed, noisy gulls repair
To sweet repose,—and Evening's magic weaves
And siren lullabies to eye and ear
Bring a great peace to seal the dear old year.